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What Others Say

Ransom Details Still Hush-Hush

The Nashville Banner

THE release of the Cuban prisoners certainly would be heartwarming to Americans generally, but as taxpayers they have had the feeling all along that sooner or later they would have to pick up the ransom tab.

As usual, they seem to be right. They knew long before an admission came from the administration that the island actually was an offensive missile base for the Soviet Union. Now the citizens are getting confirmation of another government run-around on the promise that public funds would pay no part of the cost of freedom for the captives in the 1961 invasion failure.

Congress was given the same assurance back in October when certain members discovered that plans were afoot to pass "emergency funds" or allotments from the Central Intelligence Agency budget along to Pirate Castro.

No, the government said, no federal money was involved, but now comes the announcement that the companies furnishing drugs to pay off the \$52 million blackmail demands will be given tax deductions for the donated products.

What will the write-off amount to? An Associated Press dispatch said the Internal Revenue Service was "considering \$25 million." The Wall Street Journal quotes a drug firm official as saying: "It's my understanding the taxpayer will foot the whole bill." Another declared: "No matter what plan is finally worked out, the feeling is that we won't make or lose any money."

The only loss then, whatever it is, will accrue to the taxpayer. There will be a hole in the United States Treasury and he, sooner or later, will be called upon to fill it.

This newspaper is not against freedom for the unfortunates behind bars in Havana. But it believes the time is long over-due for those who run the government to tell the whole truth about Cuba, not only concerning the ransom, but the entire situation which involves the security of the United States.

Congress and the public have been deceived long enough.

If the president feels a debt of guilt over the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the victims thereof, it should not be charged to the already overburdened tax account of the American people.

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